Rec^d Oct 3. Bos^t

English Unitarians &
Am. Abolitionists

Boston, Tuesday Eve. Sept. 19.
1848.

Dear Mr. Estlin

My last to you was written a fortnight ago this evening (& sent by the last Steamship from Boston) in acknowledgement of your letter & the parcel containing the French translation of F. Douglass's Narrative. But the burden of my letter was the severe and dangerous illness of Wendell Phillips. Thank God, I can tell you he is alive and is better, and the present prospect is encouraging. — During the last fortnight he has been apparently hanging over the brink of the grave — his physician for several days looked for the worst. The few friends, who visited him (Mr. Quincy among the number) said they could hardly recognise him, so reduced and changed is he. He himself felt that it was hardly possible for him to recover. But God has willed it otherwise in His wisdom and Mercy — as now it appears — and we look forward to seeing him with us again after (probably) long & weary months of recovery. He has taken great quantities of laudanum & morphine — to the extent of 300 drops in a day, & 175 more during the night, in one 24 hours — perhaps not many days to that extent, but every day large quantities for many days at a time. This afternoon I met Dr. Reynolds — ~~the~~ his physician — and he said that W.P. was now "doing well" he thought. But it must take a long time to get over the effects of so much medicine.

Another breeze has been raised between the English Unitarians and our American Abolitionists! In the last Annual Report of the Mass. A. S. Society (as you may remember) Mr. Quincy alluded to a recent Vote of the Newcastle Unitarians, together with a letter transmitting that vote to Boston. The Report makes a distinction between the Vote and the Letter, commending the former & speaking rather reproachfully of the latter. This was written – both of them indeed – by Rev. George Harris. The same body took the matter up again, at their last annual Meeting, and passed a pretty tart Vote (perhaps a perfectly proper one, under the circumstances) disclaiming any credit for their *Vote* which Mr. Harris did not equally share, and implying an entire readiness to back up Mr. H.'s *letter*, and if need be bear their part of whatever *dis*credit attaches to it. Mr. Gannett, with a cross preface, sends the matter to the Chr. Register & World of Saturday last (I intend to transmit you a copy) – Mr. Gannett, after mawkishly talking of the "unkind remarks" made in the A. S. Report upon Mr. Harris, turns round and applies the gentle epithet of "calumny" to what Mr. Quincy wrote and the Mass. A. S. Soc.'s Board of Managers adopted!

"Oh! wad some power the giftie gie us,
To see ourselves as ithers see us!" —

is as true of Dr. G. as of the rest of us. One might have supposed that some other motive, besides calumny, very likely dictated the style of remark in the Report. I am disposed to think — though I never saw Mr. Harris nor had any communication with him — that the Report went too far in ascribing to *him* the purpose of gratifying pro-slavery sectarian feeling here. Still I well remember that, on reading his letter, I thought it nerveless, wanting in definiteness, and too soft and complimentary to men who have never earned a title to Anti-slavery thanks. I do not think Mr. Harris would have written thus had he fully known the men. He might not have felt called upon to *rebuke* them; but seeing them so deeply involved in Slavery's meshes, as to be tongue-tied and passive, he ought to have pitied them, and *so* written — as I am fain to suppose. However, the thing is done, & cannot now be undone. I know that Mr. Garrison felt quite a warm personal regard for Mr. Harris, and *he* would much regret any misunderstanding between him & his friends and us. Mr. Garrison, by the way, continues to improve, we hear.

I have been sometime looking for a letter from you, and hope it may soon arrive. The last is your note of June 20. in the parcel containing F. Douglass's Life. I hope you have enjoyed good health this summer – your daughter, also. I hope the same is true of my good friends Messrs. Armstrong and James, to whom please offer my sincere and affectionate respects.

I think you will be pleased with Douglass's "Letter to His Old Master" which appeared in a late North Star. It struck me as very happily conceived, and very well executed in the main. He is very able, and entitled to hold an influenti position, and to some extent (I think a fast increasing extent) certainly does so hold.

The "Liberty Party" of this County has gone, in solid phalanx, with only an exception here & there, into the ranks of the so-called Free Soil party, supporting candidates who have never showed any regard for their opinions or their cause, but who have done much to counteract & embarrass both. They are utterly annihilated as a party, and their leaders, (such as Leavitt, Stanton, &c.) who have traded them away several times now, will soon fall to their true level of shame; the more they are known the less will they be trusted. I must cease, and am

With sincere regard, yours Saml. May Jr

Ms. B.1.6 v.12, p.80